

Richmond Transportation Committee

Meeting Minutes – September 12, 2023

Committee members present: Chris Cole (Chair), Cathleen Gent (Vice Chair), Keith Jennings, Jon Kart, Allen Knowles, Susan Wells, Cameron Wong

Others present: Keith Osborne (Town Planner), Joe Barch, Gary Bressor, John Linn, Jay Moltz, Kyle M., Rod West. All attended remotely.

A quorum was reached and the Chair convened the meeting at 5:32 PM.

Abbreviations used in RTC minutes: ARPA = American Rescue Plan Act of 2021; CCRPC = Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission; D&K = Dubois and King; GMT=Green Mountain Transit; PPL = Project Pipeline Document; RTC = Richmond Transportation Committee; RVC=Riverview Commons; SB = Selectboard; TAP=Transportation Alternatives Program; THBC = intersection of Thompson Rd, Huntington Rd, Bridge St, and Cochran Rd; UPWP = Unified Planning Work Program; VDH = VT Dept. of Health; VPSP2=Vermont Project Selection and Project Prioritization; VTRANS=Vermont Agency of Transportation;

1. Welcome and Public Comments: No public comments for items not on the agenda.

2. Revisions to Agenda: Gent added update on request for proposals for engineering for north/upper Bridge St. pedestrian improvements under General Updates.

3. Approve Minutes from August 22, 2023, meeting: There were no corrections or additions. **Motion by Kart, seconded by Gent, to approve the minutes. Passed unanimously.**

4. In progress projects:

a. THBC Intersection: Public Comment: Cole gave a brief review of the need for this project and the history of the RTC process and the 2021 Bridge Street Complete Streets Study. The significant crash frequency history of the intersection was mentioned, as was observed frequent driver confusion over vehicle right of way and excessive vehicle speeds.

Kart noted that recognition of the problems at this intersection goes back to at least the 2010 Bridge Street Bicycle & Pedestrian Feasibility Study.

Wells and Gent suggested the addition of a sidewalk on the south side of Huntington Road from Thompson Road west to the commercial complex.

Jay Moltz identified himself as a resident at the Huntington/Thompson corner and noted the difficulty of crossing Huntington Road there, especially with his children, due to high vehicle speeds and failure of drivers to stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk. He also reported observing frequent driver confusion over vehicle right of way. He expressed support for a sidewalk.

Gary Bressor noted that when working on a house on the corner of Thompson and Cochran Roads, he observed many near miss traffic events in the intersection. He suggested that a stepped approach to changes be considered.

Wells and Cole favored an “all at once” integrated approach.

Joe Barch said that he commutes through this intersection daily and has also observed the same problems. He suggested a 4-way stop, clear stop lines, and possibly speed tables placed about 30 yards before the stop signs on all four roads. He noted that Hinesburg recently changed the intersection at Richmond-Hinesburg Road with Texas Hill Road and North Road to a 4-way stop, eliminating yield signs and a short bypass. He felt this greatly improved safety there.

Cole suggested considering a speed table on Huntington Road where the speed limit drops from 35 to 25 mph.

Kart wondered if painted lines, etc. would be helpful as a temporary measure, and Jennings suggested temporary bollards. Cole noted the practical problems our climate imposes.

Rod West noted that he drives a tow truck through this intersection and expressed a preference for speed tables as opposed to bumps. He suggested that the Richmond Highway Department could implement some of the changes quickly.

John Linn identified himself as having business interests in the commercial complex and favors a speed table on Huntington Road at the 35/25 mph transition and also a 4-way stop for the intersection.

Gent discussed the process for moving forward, questioning 1: What will the funding source be? 2: When do we make a recommendation to the SB? Cole stated that RTC needs to check with Josh Arneson about the available balance in the Sidewalk Reserve Fund for use as matching funds. He stated that when public comment is done then RTC can work to refine design elements and make its recommendations to the SB. Knowles stated he felt public outreach has been sufficient. Osborne questioned whether an in situ public comment session is needed, as all to date has been online. Cole noted that online public participation has greatly exceeded in person attendance for other projects where in person meetings have been attempted.

Cole requested RTC members list their pros and cons for the two options under consideration (4-way stop and “preferred alternative”) as well as design refinements, for discussion at the next RTC meeting.

5. General Updates:

a. Share the Road: Wells reported the subcommittee is considering a number of ideas.

- A booth at the Farmer’s Market
- A walk-bike event, perhaps from the school to Volunteers Green
- A contest, hopefully with prizes, perhaps around Halloween, for displays or signs in yards under one of three share the road categories: car, bike, or running/walking. Themes should be “kind”.

b. Cochran Road Corridor Study: Cole, Gent and Osborne met with consultants WSP and Jason Charest of CCRPC. Gent reported WSP plans to attend the next RTC meeting with a draft scope of work.

c. Western Gateway Study: Gent reported that Dan Mallach of D&K wants to attend our next meeting to discuss alternatives and next steps. He will be put on the agenda.

d. US2 Pinch Points Study: Review of this was tabled at the last SB meeting and is on the agenda for their next meeting on September 18.

e. North/Upper Bridge St. Bike/Ped improvements: This refers to the east side sidewalk from Jolina Court to the Big Spruce and also other pedestrian and bike improvements from the 2021 Bridge Street Complete Streets Study. Cole, Gent and Osborne are working on this. Cole noted that the SB approved ARPA funds for this and it needs to move forward. Request for Proposals (RFP) to obtain an engineering firm is a next step. Problematic areas include the Northfield Bank property, which recently made parking lot and grounds changes, some of which are on Town land, done with DRB approval, and without any provision for sidewalks. On the west side, the "sidewalk" from the railroad, in front of the market, and across Railroad Street remains under discussion with the owner of the market. Osborne is to discuss with Josh Arneson and the Town attorney what approach to take.

6. Agenda Items for Next Meeting: Cole, Gent and Osborne will prepare the agenda for the next meeting

7. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Jennings, seconded by Kart. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM.

Minutes by Allen Knowles